



A NEWSLETTER OF THE VIRGINIA DEPARTMENT OF BUSINESS ASSISTANCE TO PROVIDE INFORMATION & RESOURCES TO HELP VIRGINIA BUSINESSES PROSPER

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VIRGINIA BUSINESS INFORMATION CENTER
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Child Day Care Financing Program Available

Quality affordable child care is an important asset to economic development. Child care is viewed not only as an important need for employees, but quality child care can provide an environment for developing learning skills in our young people who will one day become our future workforce. Child care options are seriously limited in some of our communities, and economic developers and community business leaders are looking for solutions.

DBA, through a loan program of the Virginia Small Business Financing Authority, provides financing assistance for child day care providers. The Child Day Care Financing Program offers regulated child care providers or pending regulated providers low-interest installment loans to fund quality enhancement projects or projects to meet or maintain state or local child care requirements, including health, safety and fire codes. A provider must be either a family day provider or operate

a child care center in Virginia, and must offer reasonable assurance of repayment of the loan.

Examples of eligible projects are installation of fencing, play-ground equipment, educational materials, furniture and fixtures, buses for transporting children for day centers, and minor remodeling for a child with special needs to meet necessary requirements under the Americans with Disabilities ACT (ADA) or the renovation or repair necessary to comply with health and safety standards.

Loans for child day care centers may be up to \$50,000 and family home providers can access up to \$5,000 in financing assistance. Interest rates are 3% below the Wall Street Journal Prime rate, with an interest rate floor of 4%. Repayment terms will match the useful life of the equipment or items purchased.

For additional information, visit www.dba.state.va.us/financing or call (804) 371-8254.

Coordinated Statewide Workforce Development Key to Helping Workers & Employers in Virginia

By Governor Mark R. Warner



Throughout my career in business and now in government, I have been committed to expanding economic prosperity to all regions of Virginia. Supporting our existing businesses, encouraging entrepreneurship, and attracting new jobs for our citizens are among my top priorities as Governor. I believe very strongly that the places that will succeed in the information economy are those with a good quality workforce and a good quality of life.

Since taking office, my administration has moved forward on a comprehensive economic plan that addresses both short-term and long-term needs in creating good jobs and a quality workforce in Virginia. From a state government standpoint, we've stepped up our efforts to include minority-, women-owned, and small businesses in procurement opportunities. This is an area Virginia still needs to improve on.

Last winter, we created the Economic Crisis Strike Force and dispatched it to hard-hit areas of Southside and Southwest Virginia. We have set up one-stop relief centers for individuals who have lost their jobs because of changing economic circumstances. In a tough year, we have created or saved more than 7,000 jobs in Southside and Southwest Virginia. If Virginia is going to prosper, we cannot leave any region behind.

Much more remains to be done to expand economic prosperity, and it is time to move forward with major reforms.

As the General Assembly's legislative oversight commission recently pointed out, we currently have 22 workforce development programs spread across 10 different agencies, in three se-

cretariats. Too often, the current system doesn't help working Virginians when they need it most. That's why I have offered a comprehensive plan to move Virginia toward a coordinated statewide workforce development system. This plan improves the existing one-stop Workforce Development Centers. As I write this, the General Assembly is considering a measure to use the model of my Coordinated Economic Relief Centers to improve one-stop Workforce Development Centers, which will help many workers get the improved training they need to be successful. Currently, workforce development services are supposed to be delivered through 43 one-stop centers created under the federal Workforce Investment Act. My proposal would bring together at one location all of the key public and private resources that employers and employees need for workforce services. We need to do this so employers and workers know where to turn for help and to avoid overlapping services and duplication.

Soon, I will announce my appointment of a single, high-level state official to coordinate workforce development. My coordinator's first assignment will be to prepare a report on the possibility of creating an umbrella agency to combine all workforce development programs now being administered by more than 10 different state agencies. This report will be due by September 1. To further streamline our workforce development efforts, I have proposed reducing the size of the Virginia Workforce Council from 43 members to 27 members. A

FEATURED CLIENT

International Veneer Company, Inc., a producer of high-quality hardwood veneer, recently invested in technological upgrades at its Virginia facility, located in Mecklenburg County. The company installed a custom-developed computer system to track their product from the procurement of the raw materials to the manufacturing, pricing and selling of the finished product. This new system will enable the company to better track the profitability of each parcel of hardwood veneer.

The company, founded in 1978, produces over 300 million square feet of veneer each year, which it ships across the U.S. and worldwide. International Veneer credits its success to its highly-trained raw material procurement personnel, and conscientious workforce which provides first rate customer service and quality veneer. The company personnel includes over 200 employees at its South Hill facility.

DBA has previously assisted International Veneer with on-the-job training and classroom training, and has produced an orientation video for the company. As a result of its technological improvements, International Veneer qualifies for DBA's Retraining Program. DBA's Workforce Services staff will work with the company to design small training modules to help train the employees on the new equipment.

C A L E N D A R

02.12.03	Doing Business with Universities, Comm. Colleges & Public Schools
03.06.03	Shenandoah Valley eBusiness Forum
03.19.03	DBA's General Assembly Wrap-up: The Business Community Impact
03.20-21.03	VEDA's Spring Conference
Visit www.dba.state.va.us for more details and other events.	

Put Your Company in the Spotlight

DBA is seeking reception sponsors for its quarterly seminars. Contact Debbie Melvin at dmelvin@dba.state.va.us or (804) 371-0371 if you are interested in having your organization featured in front of the business and economic development communities.

The New Century Venture Center Expands Services

The New Century Venture Center, a business incubator located in the City of Roanoke, recently launched "Venture Out," a program designed to extend comprehensive business services and resources to small businesses not physically located in the incubator. Venture Out offers businesses high-quality, affordable services such as dedicated computer workstations, high speed Internet access, telephone answering service with onsite receptionist and voice mail and paging capability, conference and training rooms equipped with audio-visual equipment, UPS shipping and mail services, website hosting, e-mail, fax and copying service, secretarial serv-

ices, and reduced registration fees for Center-sponsored seminars and events. For more details, call (540) 344-6402.

Small, Minority, & Women-Owned Businesses in VA

Small businesses are the backbone of the Virginia economy. The average Virginia business employs just 18 people. Ninety-nine percent of Virginia's 194,000+ business establishments employ fewer than 250 people. They account for almost two-thirds of Virginia's 3.4 million workers and nearly 60 percent of payroll. In contrast, large businesses employing 500 or more people represent less than half a percent of all establishments.

Minorities and women also play a significant and growing role in the Virginia economy. Almost 40 percent of all businesses in Virginia are owned by minorities or women. Minorities own 14,000 of Virginia's businesses with paid employees, and 71,000 are owned by women.

For additional research information, contact Jay Ruehrmund at (804) 371-0071 or jruehrmund@dba.state.va.us.

Hampton Roads Incubator Director Assists Appalachian Communities

Marty Kaszubowski, director of the Hampton Roads Technology Incubator, has been selected to serve as a mentor to

Appalachian communities interested in developing business incubators. He will be one of 15 mentors underwritten by the Appalachian Regional Commission and the National Business Incubation Association to match new incubator project leaders with seasoned program managers.

Robots Invade VA

The FIRST Robotics Competition, the nation's largest high school robotics Competition, is coming to Virginia! The competition develops critical skills in science and technology in a super-charged, high-tech learning atmosphere. It provides high school students with access to engineering mentors and effective hands-on technology-based education. In 2003, the competition will reach more than 20,000 students on over 800 teams in 24 competitions. The competitions are high-tech spec-

tator sporting events, and are the result of much focused brainstorming, real-world teamwork, and dedicated mentoring. Colleges, universities, corporations, businesses, and individuals sponsor the participants, contributing to the community and helping prepare the future workforce. The competition shows students that the technological field holds many opportunities and that the basic concepts of science, math, engineering, and invention are exciting and interesting.

**NASA/VCU Regional
FIRST Robotics Competition**
March 7th & 8th
9am - 3pm
VCU's Stuart C. Siegel Center
Richmond, VA
Free & Open to the Public!
Technical & non-technical
volunteers are welcome.
For more information
contact robotsfirst@aol.com.

GOVERNOR WARNER CONT'D

smaller working group may better enable the council to develop workforce policy in Virginia.

One important part of my reform initiative will use federal Workforce Investment Act dollars to create a new place for 18-to-24-year-olds to go beyond the traditional GED program for education and training. The Virginia Community College system will create a "Middle College" program for young adults who did not graduate from high school. These adults will be able to obtain a high school degree or equivalent, while laying the groundwork for a better job and further education in a community college setting. The first Middle Colleges will be at Southside Community College in Keysville and at J. Sargeant Reynolds Community College in Richmond. In addition, I am

seeking the development of an incumbent worker training program that would allow currently employed workers to upgrade their job skills. In today's competitive knowledge-based economy, it is vital for Virginia to become a partner with employees by investing in the training of workers.

Continuing education and training are essential to building the world-class workforce Virginia requires in the 21st century. These proposals will streamline overlapping workforce training services and improve accountability. As Virginia moves forward into the information age, workforce training will only become more important. I am confident that these reforms will help Virginians seize the opportunities of our changing economy and bring the blessings of prosperity to all Virginians.

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